

POINT

THE TOC H MAGAZINE

3

June 1998



TOC H

Bringing people together

POINT 3

Toc H is about people. Founded in 1915, Toc H fights to break down barriers by challenging individuals' preconceptions of others and the divisions which exist in society. While its work is based on Christian principles, all faiths and none are recognised and accepted.

Toc H works with people from all walks of life, tackling social problems such as loneliness, isolation and deprivation through an approach which focuses on self-help and taking responsibility for oneself and the local community.

Toc H uses the model of the compass to emphasise four personal challenges which are the inspiration for its membership. The Four Points of the Toc H Compass are:

1 Friendship: 'To Love Widely'
to 'welcome all in friendship'.

2 Service: 'To Build Bravely'
to 'give personal service'.

3 Fairmindedness: 'To Think Fairly'
to 'listen always to the views of others'.

4 The Kingdom of God: 'To Witness Humbly'
to 'acknowledge the spiritual nature of man'.

Point 3 is the magazine of Toc H, and derives its title from the third Point of the Toc H Compass. It acts as a vehicle for communication between staff and members, informing, encouraging and stimulating readers on topical and relevant issues. Contributions are welcome from any group or individual involved in Toc H.

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Cover Photo: Beware Bears in Talbot House! One of the group of U.K and Belgian volunteers who created a 'Teddy Bears picnic' for the Poperinge Carnival. See pages 4 and 5.

Toc H is an active Movement of people practising reconciliation by being open to all in friendship, offering service in the community, confronting intolerance and prejudice, and discovering a faith to live by. We bring the Toc H experience to as many people as possible to develop personal growth and build caring communities.

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PRUDENCE OR RISK

There have always been two schools of thought in Toc H about money.

One view has been that we should always exercise prudence in our money management. In other words, not spending more than we receive and always balancing the budget. That way guarantees finance for the future of Toc H. This can be called the 'prudent' policy.

The alternative view is that, as a 'Movement of the Spirit', we should take risks in faith. We should make our priority NOT the survival of the organisation but the urgent transmission of its vision, even if that uses up all the money. This can be called the 'risk' policy.

Traditionally, the Toc H Women's Association always took the 'prudent' view, while the men's Movement almost always spent more than it received, although from time to time it moved back towards the 'prudent' line. Central Council in 1992, in adopting the Strategic Plan, (which increased expenditure), was moved by calls to take risks in faith. Now, six years later, the pendulum has swung and our Central Executive Committee is taking the 'prudent' (and painful) line.

Neither is 'right' or 'wrong'. They are both perfectly valid approaches to the problems of shortage of resources. In fact, we need something of both, for if we ever completely ignore the need for prudence, or forget the need for risks in faith, then we will quickly be out of business.

What is vital is that, in fellowship, we recognise that those who hold different views to ours are probably just as committed to the real Toc H as we are. Fairmindedness does not mean we should always agree - lively argument has its place - but that we should respect those who hold different views, and respond to them with genuine argument, not dismissiveness or anger. Those who criticised the 'risk' policy in the past, saying it was 'frittering money away' were as unfair as those who criticise the present 'prudence' by saying that those who argue for it are being led by money, not values. Neither comment seems to be particularly fairminded! Both views can, and are, held by people genuinely and lovingly committed to Toc H. Let's recognise that and be thankful for it.

John Mitchell

Some readers in Scotland and Wales received two separate copies of April Point 3, in the post. We apologise for this. It was due to a computer glitch.

We can assure all concerned that Toc H did not have to pay any extra postage costs for this duplication, and the copies came out of the normal 'spares' that we print - so there was no extra print cost either.

We are sure it will not happen again because, when they have been corrected, computers never make the same mistake twice, mistake twice mistake twice mistake twice....!



WORKING WITH YOU IN YOUR COMMUNITY

26th SEPTEMBER to 3rd OCTOBER

Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, TOC H WEEK will only be 12 weeks or so away, so I hope that you have plans for your events well in hand. If not there is still time.

You should by now have received a TOC H WEEK PACK. If not, then contact one of your Regional Officers or myself. Part of that pack is a list of ideas for events, so please look through this and see if you can undertake something, even if this means joining with someone else in your area, planning an event and repeating it in each place.

Remember, this is an ideal opportunity for all of us to tell other people in our local communities, about TOC H, its philosophy, its work both nationally and locally and the opportunities that it offers them. Just think what it has offered you.

I believe that all of us in TOC H need to, "LEAP WITH JOY" and gladly seize this opportunity to carry the spirit of our movement towards the new MILLENNIUM with renewed strength,

Finally, can I ask that when you have planned your event, you let me know what you are doing.

LET'S MAKE THIS A WEEK TO REMEMBER

Yours

Colin Ridgway - Walsall Branch
20 Lichfield Road, Shelfield,
Walsall, WS4 1PY

SOME EARLY STARTERS...

In Colwyn Bay, The Toc H Scout Group are planning a Gala Day for young people.

In Kempston, the branch will hold a Guest Night, run an Exhibition, and start a new piece of Service.

Penn and Wolverhampton branches are jointly organising a line-dance.

In Walsall the branch are planning to produce a new leaflet and run an open day to introduce new people to the Cannock Chase project.

In Skelmorlie, the branch are running a Ceilidh.

In Leominster, the branch plans to carry out new, town-based, fundraising initiatives.

At Road Chef Service Stations in the South East of England, collections are to be made by volunteers from Div 3.

In Crewkerne, the branch are running a one-week charity shop.

In Buckingham the branch are organising a 'wishing week' for senior citizens - to make some dreams come true! Press coverage has already started.

In Exeter there will be an exhibition and a special service in a City centre church.

26th SEPTEMBER to 3rd OCTOBER

'WHO NEEDS THE EURO?'

For the second year running, there has been a Toc H presence in the annual Poperinge Carnival. Last year the theme was 'Mad Cows'. An Kestier, Central Councillor and Chair of Tubby's Poperinge Group, sent this report on a very successful event... and a challenge to the 'Euro'! We understand officials in Brussels are giving serious consideration to the suggested alternative.

TOC H IN THE POPERINGE CARNIVAL - MARCH 1998

THE EVENT

With a group of 22 participants, we entered the Carnival Parade in Poperinge. Poperinge's Carnival Parade is very well known in West-Flanders and is very popular with the people in Poperinge. It is one of the biggest social events in the year in Poperinge. Every year, thousands of people from all over Western Flanders come and watch it.

We started the actual project on February 20th, with the start of the float. Katrien Kestier was responsible for the creative work and she led the whole operation. The theme we worked on was a combination of the Teddybears picnic and the Euro. We called it: "European bears want their own currency: the 'bearo'". The Belgian volunteers helped where and when they could.

We made a float with a huge teddybear sitting down, with his arms and legs around a huge beehive, surrounded by bees, all with a European flag on their backs. The bear had a European flag on his back. We also made costumes out of cloth, painted brown. These were made in advance as well.

In the meantime, I had a press release article sent out to all the local newspapers, local television and radio, city council news release etc. Some newspapers printed the article in more or less its original form.

On Friday, the English volunteers arrived to help finish the work and participate in the parade. We rehearsed a dance which we performed every fourth song. When not dancing, we distributed little leaflets about Toc H and Tubby's Poperinge Group, with a balloon or a sweet attached to it. We handed out sweets and threw confetti.

In front of the tractor that pulled the float was a huge board that says 'Toc H UK/Belg'. The name of our group and the theme were also explained in the programme booklet that was distributed by



Volunteers from the U.K and Poperinge practise the Teddy Bears dance, before their appearance in the Poperinge Carnival.

some volunteers in front of the parade to the spectators.

On Monday there was a Salient Tour for all participants and we finished with reflections.

THE ORIGINAL AIMS OF THE EVENT

- To promote Toc H, Tubby's Poperinge Group and Talbot House, and in general, to increase the awareness of Toc H and our local group in Poperinge and surrounding area.
- To attract new members, to form new friendships.

Achievements

- *Planned achievements:*

We handed out 1,600 leaflets. Our name was mentioned in front of the float, in the programme booklet and in the newspapers that listed all participants. We had some articles about our group, our aims and work printed in some newspapers. We went to the reception where all participants and the municipality were present and have made ourselves seen and heard. And most important of all: we met a lot of people asking us what Toc H means and what a mixed British/Poperinge group was doing in the carnival parade. Apparently, this is a very peculiar thing and we noticed very clearly that people were wondering about that and were talking about us. In this respect I can clearly state that we achieved the aim of increasing the awareness of Toc H and our group. As in Poperinge, it is impossible to explain Toc H without mentioning Talbot House, we also achieved this aim.

- Two boys, Carlos and David, helped making the float and participated in the parade. They have never come to our group meetings and projects before but are very enthusiastic. We are sure we will see them again and I am pretty convinced that they will become members in the (near) future (they are 15). Through our talks with other people, we have made some contacts with youngsters who are interested, but for the moment it is too early to tell more about this.

- The Belgians and the English volunteers mixed very well. This project is different in the sense that our Belgian volunteers do not sleep in the House and are not present all the time. Nevertheless, we tried to build a solid team out of it and to mix the people, which worked very well. We had some very silent and shy people, one deaf person, two gay people, some older (40+) and some very young (15). I have the impression that everybody accepted everybody, which was confirmed to me by Adrian (deaf), Glenn and others. In this respect, we also achieved the new-friendship aim.

Unexpected achievements

- On Sunday morning, the treasurer of the Talbot House Bestuurraad, Mr William Devloo, came in with his little daughter. The girl saw us rehearsing our dance and was so keen on joining us that her father finally gave permission. Afterwards, we gave the girl her costume and mask as a gift and thus created a lot of goodwill with her father. (Her picture is on the front cover of this issue - Ed)
- We had a long talk with Antoon Couttenye about the parade (he was president of the jury) and our entry. He told us that we represented Talbot House and Toc H in a fine way and that people finally got to know us. In general the relation with the Talbot House Bestuurraad has increased a lot during this weekend. This was unexpected but very important for the relation and the future of Toc H and Talbot House.
- The Salient Tour turned out to be a surprise, considering the fact that one of the party, Trudie Charles (recently appointed staff member in East London) is German and most of the others were British. Trudie gave us a whole new perspective on the war and on the meaning of the German Military Cemeteries, which was very interesting.



Toc H Teddies - volunteers who joined the Carnival in Poperinge portraying the Teddy Bears picnic.

Follow up

- We will contact all people involved in the parade and in the making of the float to join us in future projects and activities. And this for



Sally Simms - Project Co-ordinator, being "arrested" by Police in Poperinge - but she hotly denies assertions that her fall down the stairs at Talbot House, which damaged her leg, was due to any excesses! An Kestier, Chairman of Tubby's Poperinge group, (and not normally that shape!) watches.

both the Belgians and the British. They will also be asked to become members of our group and of Toc H.

- We were mentioned in the newspapers that printed the results of the parade.
- Our group has made a photo album that lies in Talbot House for inspection. According to Martine Boone (Liaison Officer at Talbot House) this album is frequently looked in and appreciated by the visitors.
- We plan another entry in next years carnival and we want to let the municipality know in advance that a special mixed British/Poperinge group is entering, so that maybe they will do something special for us in the reception.

Conclusions

We have worked on all Four Points of the Compass. The group was very diverse in age, religion, character, nationality.... This has made the event very valuable for all participants. Some of our Belgian people who haven't seen a lot of the world yet, got a whole new look on other people and people with a disability and they experienced that these contacts are fun and worthwhile. We have made fun together and we cried together and above all, we all made a lot of new friends.



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Rushden there will be an event every day of Toc H week - including a public meeting, a whist drive, a cheese and wine party, a coffee evening and a Blood Donor Recruitment Day at a local supermarket.

'SPIRITUALITY' - Does it actually mean anything?

Many people these days seem more confident talking about spirituality than about faith, or religion. But when people use the word, what exactly do they mean by it? We asked the Rev. Colin Rudd to say what spirituality means to him. Colin has had two spells on the Toc H Staff as a Chaplain, and is currently an Honorary 'Chaplain to the Upper Room' (at Talbot House). He is priest for three parishes in Oxfordshire.

We also asked some other lay people involved in Toc H (and not all Christians) to do the same exercise, but within the discipline of a 250-word limit. We are very grateful to them for all their contributions.

Spirituality.

I wonder if you recognise this?

Spirituality (n). Spiritual quality; (usu. pl.) what belongs to or is due to the Church or to an ecclesiastic as such, the - ties of his office, -y of benefices, tithes of land, etc.

I was confirmed in 1955, and my Godfather, to the accompaniment of more than a few raised eyebrows, presented me with a copy of The Concise Oxford Dictionary. It was the latest, up to date edition, having been published only the previous year, and it is from that up-to-the-minute, state-of-the-art publication that the definition of spirituality at the head of this article comes. No one, I think, except perhaps the most abstruse pedant, would define spirituality today in what seems such an extraordinary way, and I suppose it serves to indicate, at least, just how much language has changed, and how careful we need to be in using it.

For use it we do - the word 'spirituality', I mean. Preachers preach about it, it is the title subject of conferences and retreats and quiet days, and is, I suspect, thoroughly overworked in the church and in organisations like Toc H. It is guaranteed an interest and a market - but what on earth is it actually about? Clearly, it no longer means what it meant a scant 40+ years ago - I can't see people queuing up for places on a weekend about "tithes of land, etc". But maybe, even though it may not be altogether clear what we mean when we use it, the word has gained at least something in clarity compared with that 1954 definition. It now means broadly what it says - it has to do with things spiritual, and the upsurge of interest in recent years arises out of a growing awareness that the material world, wonderful though it may be, can leave us untouched in our innermost selves and at the points of our deepest needs. In a society such as ours, where the material needs of the vast majority are, in large measure, met adequately, there is widespread discontent with the very limited way in which materialism on its own can help us to be whole, and an equally widespread disillusionment arising out of the greed and ruin which too much concentration on the material can bring in its wake. The resurgence of

interest in things spiritual is not something to be surprised at.

However, there are risks, and they can be considerable. It is, of course, right to welcome an open return of the spiritual perspective, and it's exciting for someone like me to hear people discussing 'spiritual things' in public. It is a profoundly hopeful sign. But it is not, on its own, a panacea, and those who treat it as though it were are likely, in time, to become as disillusioned with 'spirituality' as they have with 'materialism'. Vague, well-meaning approaches can lead us up all kinds of blind alleys - fascination with witchcraft (very much on the increase at the moment), with spiritualism, astrology. It can become exploited for financial gain - it can still cost you a small fortune to learn Transcendental Meditation - and encourage the use of drugs in the pursuit of 'spiritual experience'.

It is dangerous on its own because, just as materialism in isolation denies our spiritual nature so spirituality, in isolation, denies something essential about our nature as material beings. But at the heart of the Christian faith is the most vivid of assertions that we are both material and spiritual beings. That assertion is most strikingly set out in the prologue to St. John's Gospel, in which he writes quite simply that 'the Word was made flesh'. God, who had always been thought of as the purest spirit, became that very material thing, a man, not as a way of divesting himself of his spiritual nature but in order to make that nature real to us. In him there is a striking unity between the spiritual and the material - in that sense, at least, Jesus is whole, and there is no splitting off in him, no denial of his manhood or of his spirit-hood. In him both come together in a perfect balance.

The strength of the appeal of Toc H is that it takes the challenge of the Christian faith seriously in exploring the link between the material and the spiritual, and it does it in a grounded way. To 'Build bravely, Love widely & Think fairly' are fine aims to have, and real, if difficult, targets to strive for, but in the end they can only lead us forwards on the path to wholeness if they find their energy in the need to express and explore the Fourth Point. In as far as Toc H has done that, and

can continue to do so it makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the spirituality of that so material creation - humanity.

Colin Rudd

Actually, I don't really use the word *Spirituality* often. The somewhat scientific "ITY" implies a definite or material article - and I feel that *Spirituality* is rather more conceptual. Perhaps it's easier to define it by deciding what it isn't.

Religion is "definite" - the word even has a certain physical presence (images of church/mosque, etc). *Religion* implies *organisation* (both noun and verb) and also *community*. These are Terms and Conditions, set down for you by others; you have to read the small print and stick to it to qualify!

Faith has a sense of greater freedom, but still has a certain physical presence. There are still Terms and Conditions, but set down by the individual. Your own faith may happen to reflect the faith of certain other people, but the very word *faith* still suggests that this is simply a happy coincidence. Your own Faith is wholly yours - *an individual entity*.

Spirituality comes from *spiritual* - an airy, floating word, adopted for a variety of uses:

- to replace the rather limiting and perhaps even dangerous concept of *religious*.
- to help someone express a strong emotion, the like of which they have never experienced before and so do not recognise.
- to mock those who have "non-standard" beliefs (e.g. used in conjunction with the word "hippy")
- to describe a person who has no standard religion, but who has strong psychic beliefs - "*I have no religion, but I am strongly in touch with my inner self...*"

Clare Smythson

Clare Smythson was a Long Term Volunteer with Toc H in the late '80s. and is currently an active member of the S.E. Region Projects Committee.

When I joined the staff of Toc H I was not a Christian. That did not mean that I did not have a well developed idea of spirituality. To me God existed but was very difficult to make any contact with. When I started to work for Toc H, I trained under Bob Knight. He accepted my view of God, but made it clear that there was a way to God, or an understanding of who God was and his interest in us. We found God through our relationships with other people. Spirituality for Bob was like a muscle; you would not grow in your spirit if you did not use it. Some people refer to spirituality as the third eye.

To me my spiritual development is made up with periods where I do not have a clear idea of who God is and what he wants from me. Then there is a breakthrough, when I see everything and understand him and his nature. It is like a perfect relationship, because I am part of what I can understand. Still the whole thing is so enormous that I cannot remain in that state of bliss. Things return to normal, and for me I live in faith that sometime in the future I will have another "vision".

To me that is what my spirituality is all about.

John Dickson

John Dickson served on the staff in the Southern Region and then in the West Midlands. He is currently an active member of the Families Group in the West Midlands... together with his wife Rebecca and their twins.

Fresh in my mind is last night's episode of 'Ballykissangel'. The young priest can no longer express with his heart the words and actions required of him by his vocation. In a tender and requited love for a young woman he had sensed a deep reality, only to have it cruelly snatched away from him by her sudden death. Now, his possessions in a rucksack, he takes the road away from his parish and his friends. Like Abraham, he "went forth not knowing whither he went".

This morning's front page newspaper photo shows a father being evicted in a headlock from a church after protesting about his son's compulsory attendance at First Communion which neither of them desired.

What was it that elicited such a widely shared response to the life of Princess Diana?

In an age of wider awareness we seek an overarching meaning to life which is not seen to be imposed by external authority, but which arises from the response of the heart and imagination to the fact of continuing revelation. The pace of scientific discoveries and their dissemination bring home to us our interdependence with the whole of creation. To treat the natural world, including our fellow creatures, as objects for exploitation is increasingly unacceptable. Science and spirituality are converging. We are learning, with a struggle, to think with the heart and stand in awe before the mystery of existence.

One final thought. A star has a life of about 10,000,000,000 years. It then explodes and the material returns to space for recycling. Our bodies are made from star material. Is this a scientific or spiritual statement?

John Bayes

John is a long standing Member in Guisborough, North Yorkshire, and has served several terms as a Central Councillor.

Why bother about "spirituality"? Why not just get on with it and finish the job? It'll save a lot of time and we can then get on to the next job quicker. Think of how much more we'll get done! We will achieve more; we will be better off; we will be more satisfied; we will be happier. All will be well with the world....I wonder why it doesn't seem to work?

A popular theory of motivation claims that man is a wanting animal who progresses up the ladder of needs as his more basic requirements are satisfied. So when his fundamental needs of food and shelter are catered for, he needs security of existence, then moves on to social requirements, then esteem, and finally to self fulfilment. It is in this final area, which includes the arts and religion, that spirituality resides. Thus our journey through life cannot be complete unless we come to terms with our own spirituality. One of the major attractions of Toc H is that it addresses all of these areas in its ethos and activity. Many other charities fulfil basic needs, social activity, and esteem but few have our equivalent of the "fourth point". The "Kingdom of God" with its acknowledgement of spirituality and commitment to the Christian way of life is at the core of our identity. We must treasure it and guard it.

Jeremy Topham

Jeremy lives in Cardiff where he first met Toc H through his parent's involvement. He is currently our Honorary National Treasurer.

And finally some extracts from a letter to John Dunwell (Development Officer in Division 1), from Jeff Clark. Jeff is a former prisoner at HMP Ranby who met Toc H first during the project in the prison in 1997 - and has since his release been on other Toc H events. He was baptised and confirmed while in prison.

On the spiritual side of things I don't know how to use the right words. I guess it all happened so fast - one minute I was on the brink of cracking up in so many words. It was the lowest time of my life. I had no-one to talk to so I talked to the Chaplain at Ranby. He placed his hands on my head and blessed me. I can't explain what happened next, it just felt like a big weight had been lifted from me. I cried. I felt good inside my heart and I started to walk with my head held high.....

....Since that day my whole life has swung around. From the person who now I find it hard to believe I was to be the person I now know I am....

.....I know you wanted me to write an article on the spiritual side, John. I really don't know how to put it into words. It's like I said. 12 months ago I thought I had lost everything, and now I know I've made my peace with God. Now I can only go forward. I also know it's not going to be easy. The future is down to me - a day at a time, a little encouragement and the praying will help. This time I have a chance to do something with my life.'

'HOW LONG DOES A 12 WEEK COURSE LAST?'

by Roger Giles

Development Officer - Division 1

Living on your own is not unusual. In fact, over one in four households are now one-person households. Yet living on your own may not be through choice. It's a situation which, for many, is caused by circumstances such as separation, divorce or bereavement.

But what happens when we are faced with it? Not only do we find ourselves alone, but we are left with many other problems. What may have been simple tasks for our partners can suddenly become major problems for ourselves. A dripping tap, a fuse that needs changing, cooking-for-one, basic car maintenance, household finance and many other tasks can become great challenges and potential pitfalls.

It was with this in mind, and some positive enthusiasm from Terry Brown (Chaplain, Division 3) that Tom Elliott (Chaplain, Division 1) and I took an initiative. We decided to try to put together a 12-week course. This would offer a group of people the chance to come together, to meet and share friendship, and to listen to experts who would give them simple instructions about the problems and pitfalls they were facing.



Two of the Course participants examining the Toc H Events Calendar.

So, a time and place was fixed for a first meeting - Grimsby Town Hall in the early evening. We received a lot of help from Grimsby CVS, and we had articles in two local papers (through the help of a 'Toc H-friendly' journalist!). We advertised my telephone number and I received 25 enquiries before the start. The first night 16 people came, of whom about three-quarters were women - and the whole scheme was aimed primarily at people of 40 or over - in fact the age range has been about 40 to 65.

Tom and I thought we had most things covered. If the group requested instruction on cooking for one, or leaky taps, we had people lined up who would come and give professional advice. We offered them a fee of £15 for a talk, but in the event none of them claimed a penny. We had covered everything, or so we thought!

After a general introduction and a cup of tea, we set about finding out what the group required. 'What I would like to know' said one, 'is How do I mend a flat tyre on my bike?'

Well, we thought we had everything covered, but the best made plans..... At the end of the first night Tom and I could sense that this group was going to get on very well. We had a verbal agreement by all that they would like to carry on for the agreed 12 weeks we had planned.

During these 12 weeks we shared a lot of fun, and laughter, and a few tears. The group also had a concern about what they were going to do after the twelfth week. On one evening I had been asked to give a talk on Toc H and the work I do. They were very interested in a project that involved taking a group of less privileged children away on a Christmas holiday. 'How can we help?' 'Can we help with fund-raising?' 'Can we go on the project?' were some of the questions raised. So this group, who were complete strangers a few weeks before, now wanted to be involved in a residential project.

The group calls itself, unofficially, 'Sole Survivors from Grimsby' - but actually a number of them have become much involved in DOGTAG (District of Grimsby Toc H Action Group). Eight are now members of Toc H and some of them recently visited Poperinge.

I could go on and on about this wonderful group, but I will finish with the question I started with - 'How long does a 12-week course last?' In the case of Sole Survivors from Grimsby, the answer is 'for ever and a day....'



Instruction on mending punctures - given by Ross Bancroft, a local bicycle dealer and repairer who, by amazing coincidence, was a Toc H Long Term Volunteer in the '80s.

THE ORIGINS OF THE IDEA

The idea of these 12-week courses for those living alone was pioneered by 'Group 88' - a voluntary organisation operating in South East London and West Kent. Toc H has been in contact with them over the last year-and-a-half. A suggestion of a formal merger with Group 88 was rejected by Central Council in 1997, but local links are being developed between them and Toc H in the South East Region.

Similar 'starts' have been made in Guisborough, N Yorks (where 8 people are now meeting weekly, with occasional speakers), and at Tonbridge, Kent, where 9 people recently attended a first night. Possibilities are being explored in Beverley, Sheffield, Bradford, Barton-on-Humber, Penmaenmawr, Leominster, Wyre Forest, Gloucester and Bedford.



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Runcorn, members of Friendship Circles Colwyn Bay are to meet with people from the 'Families under Pressure' scheme at a gathering to launch Toc H Week locally.

LONG EATON TOC H - A STORY OF RENEWAL

Long Eaton Men's Branch was formed in 1931. Many and varied were the jobs initiated, passing them on to others when established, and then moving onto the next project.



The oldest member and youngest helper sort out raffle tickets.

The years that followed saw many changes. Members moved on, some moved away, all grew older and some died, until in 1990 we were down to four members, three

octogenarians and one in his late sixties. We had our own headquarters which had become run down through lack of maintenance and funds. At this time a welcome monetary bequest gave us the means to start repairs to the house. New concrete floors, and damp proofing, structurally and internally, were carried out and the ground floor completely redecorated.

We then organised a Get-together of members and friends with members of other branches. We went out into the highways and byways and as a result we were granted Branch status in 1991 as a Joint Branch.



A coffee morning in the re-furnished Branch Rooms.

Through our contacts with the Scouts Executive we were provided with chairs that needed painting and re-upholstering. With good team-work these were completed, giving us a comfortable and very presentable meeting room. New members - new brooms - we decided to tackle the upstairs rooms and toilet. All rooms were decorated. Both rooms and stair-case and toilet were carpeted throughout. New curtains,



Packing Christmas parcels for people with impaired sight.

furniture, fixtures and fittings, a complete re-wire, new cooker, new front door were all provided by members and friends.

In 1996, when the house was

completely refurbished, we held a very successful Open Day. During all this work Branch life still went on. We held coffee mornings, monthly whist drives, supported The Blood Donor scheme and worked for the sight-impaired.



Frank Kirk meets the Mayor and Mayoress at a Toc H Coffee Morning in the Town Hall.

1997 was a very busy year. Coffee mornings at our headquarters, and a big coffee morning at the Town Hall with the Mayor of Erewash helping us for over two hours. A table top sale in aid of the local drama group, a coffee evening at the house of one of our members. All to raise money for our various charities.

For many years we have been involved with the sight-impaired in our area and our fundraising efforts enabled us to provide 155 parcels and



The bookstall in the market.

Christmas cards which we packed and personally delivered to them. All our efforts have been a tremendous success. We have had much help from our many friends, and we also work closely with the local Talking Newspaper group.

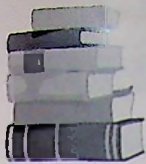
Our message to you all is - Don't close branches, Start new ones - Talk about 'Toc H' Go out into the highways and byways. It's Good to Talk. Good wishes to you all.

Frank and Shady Kirk



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Skipton the branch are organising a treasure hunt, and also launching an annual inter-charity quiz.



BOOK REVIEW: 'No ordinary man' - Resources for reflective worship on the person of Jesus'.

We are pleased to print some extracts from a longer review written by Constance Beazley, and printed in 'The Great Western'. We thank them for permission to use this.

"NO ORDINARY MAN"

This new book by Nick Fawcett is in two parts - Section I - Meditations; Section II comprises Service Outlines together with ideas for Quiet Days.

Meditations - "Sometimes a light surprises"

Opening a new book is always somewhat of an adventure. One never knows what one will find. Reading the first part of this book has been to me like opening a door into a long corridor with a succession of windows, through each of which a light shines, illuminating something which I have seen before, but never in quite the same way, so that I see it from a different viewpoint and with a new clarity.

The founders of the Toc H Movement pledged themselves to strive "...to know the will of God revealed in Christ...". Throughout the years of its life, generations of members have repeated these words as, in their turn, they have renewed that pledge. In the contemporary "Statement of Reaffirmation of the fundamental purpose of Toc H", members commit themselves to test in their own lives the validity of the claims made by Jesus in His teaching and in the way He lived.

Whether seeking to "know the will of God Revealed in Christ", or in contemporary language to "test in our own lives the validity of the claims made by Jesus in His teaching and in the way He lived", our sources of learning must be the New Testament, the narratives written by those who knew Jesus during His life as a man on earth, or heard of Him and His teaching through His friends.

Nick Fawcett has chosen a unique way of making these encounters and expositions come alive. In his meditations on the life of Jesus, from

the prophecies preceding His birth to His death and resurrection, and on the activities and writing of the apostles after His ascension, Nick attempts to achieve a wider and deeper understanding of the meaning of that life, as seen through the eyes of those who knew Jesus.

Each of the one hundred meditations is related to a passage from Scripture and is set against the historical and cultural background of the time. As well as providing for personal study "Meditations" will be valuable for discussion in groups.

Services

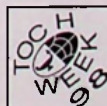
The second section of this book is both inspirational and very practical. It provides complete "Orders of Service" for selected occasions, which can be used as presented, or adapted. However they are used, they will be invaluable to any person or group looking for guidance in planning or leading a service. Similarly there are "programmes" for Quiet Days which can be used in their entirety or in part.

In addition, there is a wealth of information on the use of visual aids and musical accompaniment, with advice regarding sources of material and equipment and suggestions of musical items specifically suitable for particular occasions.

I am sure that "**NO ORDINARY MAN**" will be welcomed by a wide variety of people at different stages of exploration into the Christian faith and way of life and will prove to be of great benefit to both individuals and groups seeking to practise the Christian Way.

Constance Beazley

NO ORDINARY MAN is published by Kevin Mayhew Ltd, of Bury St Edmunds, ISBN No 1 84003 0283 - and sells at £19.99p.



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Rickmansworth - members and volunteers will mount a street exhibition to publicise Toc H, and our new Adventure Centre, and there will also be a street collection..

THE TOC H BOX IN THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Many years ago a member of Toc H left in his legacy a Box at the Royal Albert Hall for the use of Toc H members and friends. With the changes that have taken place at Central Services it seems a good time to remind the members about the Box and its limitations.

First of all let me give you a few of the facts about the Box. It was never intended to be a fund raising asset for Toc H, but neither was it intended ever to make a loss. The Royal Albert Hall has the right to declare some events exclusive. This means that we have to give up the Box for that event. Usually this is not more than 75 times a year. The major expense is a 'Maintenance' contract we are required to have with the Royal Albert Hall. This is not a fixed amount but is determined by the amount of use the hall gets during a year and can amount to £5.5k and this is what determines the costs we have to raise plus, of course, a small amount for telephone, postage etc.

Now, how does one get to use the Box?

Barbara Martin has agreed to deal with the Box on a voluntary basis, which is very helpful

as she has had her finger on the pulse for some time when working at 'Wendover'.

All Members and Friends of Toc H may apply for tickets, but first priority will be given to those on the subscription list, in particular when tickets have to be balloted. The current cost of going on the list is £10. per year. It is assumed that the first two tickets applied for, for any event, by a person on the list is for their own use. All other tickets, including all people not on the subscription list, will carry an enhanced rate in line with the cost of the ticket but not normally more than £2.00 extra per ticket.

Should you wish to go on the list, then write to Barbara Martin at;

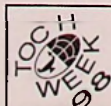
Central Services, at Wendover or
Ring or Fax. Barbara on; 01296 623158

Any visitors from Toc H overseas can use this facility, but should bear in mind that tickets are very popular and go quickly after the programme is sent out. If overseas visitors know the dates they will be in the UK, it will be advisable to plan ahead and make contact early.

COULY'S CENTURY

Rita Coulson, better known across Toc H as 'Couly' was 100 in March. Our picture, by courtesy of the Grantham Journal, shows her family and friends helping her celebrate, and during the day staff members John Burgess, Martine Boone and Tom Berry dropped in to congratulate her and give her the good wishes of Toc H.

Couly came to London in 1926, and became secretary to Tubby - and remained steadfast in this role until 1965. Tubby had a day and a night secretary, such was his output, and Couly was for many years his night secretary. To this day she keeps in touch with many friends she made during those years.



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Wyre Forest - the branch plan an exhibition in a local museum.

TAUNTON JOINT BRANCH

For more than three years now, a rota of members has met every week at a local nursing home. They have tried to be friends, and give encouragement. Most of the 24 residents have mental health problems, ranging from depression to Alzheimer's disease. The

Branch gives a regular Christmas party, and the 1997 party was very successful - including Carols, games, gifts, tea and cake - and was very much appreciated. The Branch, in its turn, acknowledges that this is all made possible by the love and care of the staff.



Pat and Jack Turner, Jean Bags and Phil Watling on the second leg of their Australian tour - in Adelaide. They are pictured outside the Headquarters of Toc H, South Australia, where the 1997 World Chain of Light started.



Suzanne Dunwell (Regional Co-ordinator) and Martin Brownlee running the stall at a Car Boot Sale in Bedale, which raised £225 for Family Purse.

BUCKINGHAM BRANCH

Alison Chown hopes to represent Britain at the Paralympics in wheelchair basketball. She is 16 years of age and at present studying for her GCSE at the Buckingham School. Due to her disability she requires a special wheelchair adapted for the sport. The Buckingham Advertiser recently wrote a special article about her, and as a result Buckingham Toc H assisted with a donation towards the cost of £1,000.



The New Tees group, in Cleveland, was recognised as a branch in April. Development Officer, John Dunwell, is seen presenting the lamp to the new branch. The branch is planning another long-distance walk from Stockton-on-Tees to Wendover, to co-incide with Toc H Week.



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Wednesfield - the branch's 70th birthday coincides with Toc H Week so, among other celebrations, they are mounting a birthday exhibition in the library and organising coffee mornings.

CHANGES TO TOC H MEMBERSHIP

fresh faces and fond farewells

Every Member makes an invaluable, individual contribution to Toc H. In a regular feature, Point 3 acknowledges both those who are new to membership and those who sadly have passed on. The Tributes and Farewells provide a limited opportunity to recognise the individual contributions made by those whose membership has sadly come to a close.

WELCOMES

- **Gwen Bedford**, member of Crewkerne Branch.
- **Henry Bedford**, member of Crewkerne Branch.
- **Doreen Partridge**, member of Higham Ferrers Branch.
- **Rosamond Allen**, member of Higham Ferrers Branch.
- **Gordon Christon**, member of New Tees Branch.
- **Ann Cook**, member of New Tees Branch.
- **Mabel Baggaley**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Lucy Batchford**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Kathleen Clarke**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Dorothy Johnson**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Charles Sizer**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Irene Sizer**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Magaret Southwood**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Irene Whitaker**, member of Orston Branch.
- **Joan Godsell**, member of Porlock Branch.
- **David Roberts**, member - Prestatyn & District.
- **John Kennerley**, member - WM/SW District.

FAREWELLS

In March

- **Wilfred West**, member of Wellingborough Branch.

In April

- **John Crowffot**, member of Broughton Astley Branch.
- **George Curtis**, member of Cirencester Branch.
- **Nelson Hall**, member of London District.
- **Robert Hart**, member of Uckfield Branch.
- **Violet Hunt**, member of Southampton Branch.
- **Marion Kenny**, member of Anstey Branch.
- **Jeanne Luyckx**, member of Poperinge Branch.
- **Peter Macey**, member of Kennington Branch.
- **Elsie White**, member of Brandon Branch.

In May

- **William Cochrane**, member of Uxbridge Branch.

No Date

- **Amy Brearly**, member of Greenbank Branch.
- **Hilda Brazier**, member of Lodon Vale Branch.
- **Dorothy Dainton**, member of Westham Branch.
- **Margaret Hawley**, member of Bognor Regis Branch.
- **Phyllis Massey**, member of Westham Branch.

TRIBUTES

- **JEANE LUYKX** was a respected member of Poperinge Branch. She married John Boyd, an Irish soldier who fought in Poperinge at the end of World War II. They celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1997, a celebration which was clouded by the sudden death of their eldest grand-daughter a few months later. Jeanne died peacefully on April 2nd, and her faithful husband of 51 years John, followed her only two days later on April 4th. A service was held at St George's Memorial Church in Leper. They will be missed. **VD**

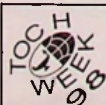
- **MARION KENNEY** was a founder member of the Anstey Ladies Branch in 1947. For many years the Ladies 'jobmaster', she was a very dependable, stalwart member who (with Fred her husband in the Mens Branch) was always at the front of any branch activity. A member till the end. She is missed by all. **RE**

- **HARRY GORDON JONES** who died on April 5th, aged 79, came to the area as Vicar of the neighbouring village of Abbotsham in 1979 and retired in 1985. He was a loyal member of Bideford Joint Branch, serving as branch Padre and Central Councillor for several years, and also Treasurer for awhile, until failing health forced him to give up branch office. He will be sadly missed by us all. **JDC**

- **GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS** was just an ordinary member of Toc H. One of a thousand yet one in a thousand. Always willing to leap with joy to any task for others. His life was firmly based on his Christian faith, in his church, in the branch or especially in his family life. He will be greatly missed. **JWM**

- **WILLIAM (BILL) COCHRANE** who died aged 85, will be much missed. He was a well known local figure in Uxbridge, doing much for the Old People's Welfare group, and until last Christmas was responsible for food parcels. Some ten years ago his younger brother had a stroke, and was confined to bed. Bill would not hear of him going into a home or hospital. but looked after him himself until shortly before his own death. **LS**

BISHOP TREVOR HUDDLESTON who died in April, was, while Bishop of Stepney, a very active Patron of Number Seven, the Toc H hostel for young Bengalis started by Peter East. At least once a month he would drop in and spend time talking to the residents. At times of tension in the area he would come more frequently. Later when Peter had moved to Sylhet to start the Khasdobir Youth Action Group, Trevor Huddleston visited the project with his friend Donald Chesworth, and responded warmly to the friendliness of the children in the Schools Under The Sky. "I doubt whether there's another bishop in the world who's addressed as 'bhai'", he said to Peter. (Bhai means brother and all visitors to the project, female as well as male, are called bhai by the children). The Bishop also gave support and encouragement to the small group of members who, in the '70s, set up the Stepney Children's Camping Association, which organised camping trips, for children and for families, to Rickmansworth. Toc H, along with the rest of the world, mourns the passing of a great human being. **KP-B**



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Taunton and in Solihull there will be exhibitions in local libraries.

THE INTERNET AND E-MAILS

- I wonder how many Toc H people are on the Internet and use E-mail? Have you visited the Toc H web site yet? Use your search engine to find it! If you are interested in helping form a register of E-mail addresses, so that other Toc H members and staff can contact you, please E-mail me with a short description of your activities and position, and I will log these. Put "Toc H" in the subject line.
stoneham@stoneham.demon.co.uk

We seem to be very reticent about publicising our Toc H events. It is part of the ethos that we do not seek praise or publicity for our efforts, preferring to believe that it is part of our "Service" - the rent we pay for our time on earth. Although this is laudable, it does not help Toc H in its present situation. The Outside World is used to information/publicity being given in a professional manner, via Newspaper Articles, Posters, Pamphlets, and now via such other media as the Internet.

I have heard members say that some of our publications are too expensive to produce, and that they look too nice. I'm afraid that anything produced on a computer will look professional, and if we feel that this sends the wrong message perhaps we should look carefully at our image and our objectives. If we are content to keep the old way, then I'm afraid that Toc H will soon no longer exist.

Chris Stoneham
Hainault, Essex

WELCOME HOME

- March 26th was a Special Day for Bournemouth and Christchurch Branch, as Toc H put on a "Welcome Home" Lunch to our Rowers Mark & Steve. Mike Lyddiard, all the way from Wendover, and Mary Edwards were present, as were Terry Brown and Tom Berry of Division 3. Also, local Fire Chiefs, representatives from other organisations and relatives and friends of Mark & Steve.

It was great to see "The lads" again - looking so well and tanned, and they spoke of their experiences on the Row (an account of which was in April Point 3), showed some wonderful slides and a video.

The Branch served a very enjoyable buffet lunch which gave everyone a further opportunity to chat.

We all felt very proud, and a little humble, to have been part of their great adventure, however small, and we wish them both every success in the future.

Sheila Gates
Bournemouth

A NEW KIND OF MINISTRY

- I am delighted to be able to tell you that, following my departure from the Toc H staff at the end of March, I have been appointed as Team Rector of the Langtree Team Ministry in the diocese of Oxford.

The Team covers five small villages about 7 miles north of Reading. A non-stipendiary woman priest looks after North Stoke and Ipsden; there is a vacancy for a Team Vicar in Woodcote; the Team Rector looks after Checkendon and Stoke Row, and leads the team.

After my years with Toc H this is obviously going to be a very different kind of ministry but I take with me many fond memories and much gratitude for all that Toc H has given me. My wife Elizabeth and I are particularly grateful for all the letters, cards and telephone calls we have received during the last few months. It was always very strengthening to know that so many people were being supportive.

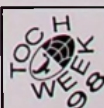
I shall, of course, continue to remember Toc H and all my friends and colleagues in my prayers. I hope that you will remember me too, especially on Thursday 2nd July when I shall be inducted into the parish by the Bishop of Dorchester. Please do try to keep in touch. You can contact us (from 2nd July) at The Rectory, Checkendon, Reading, RG8 0SR, telephone 01491 680252.

With every blessing, **Alan Johnson**
Wendover

ARMY CHAPLAINS

- Please could any ministers who served as a padre, and officers and soldiers who had contact with padres during the Second World War, write to me and assist with the research I am doing towards a PhD. If you know anyone else who may be able to comment on the work of chaplains, please draw their attention to my request. I am investigating the relationship between soldiers and chaplains that developed during the war. Usually this relationship was close and supportive, but occasionally there were tensions and disagreements. During WW2, chaplains trained at Chester Teacher Training College, this institution has now become University College Chester where I work. Please write to Alan Robinson, Dept of History, University College Chester, Cheyney Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, or phone me on 01244 341088.

Alan Robinson
Chester



What are YOU doing for Toc H Week?

In Burraton members are visiting various local forums to talk about Toc H.

NOTICE BOARD

TOC H WEEK PRAYER VIGIL

There will be a Prayer Vigil on Michaelmas Day (29th September) from 3-00 p.m to 6.00 p.m on the theme 'Share The Light'.

The idea came from Wolverhampton Women's Branch, which will be the focus for the event. The aim is twofold - to encourage reflection and renewed commitment among existing members, and to let others outside Toc H know what it stands for.

A resource pack for the vigil is being prepared by Rev. Nick Fawcett, which will be available from Divisional Chaplains shortly. The Chaplaincy team are also producing a number of audio-visual presentations which can be used by branches to introduce Toc H to new people.

THE PRINT ROOM LIVES ON...

Thanks to an initiative by Wendover Action Group (an offshoot of Chiltern Hills Branch), what used to be 'The Print Room' at Central Services is now 'The Wendover Community Press'... and is still open for business.

Nikki Mackenzie is still in charge and able to meet Toc H (and other) print orders on the same basis as before.

For new order forms, write to Nikki Mackenzie, at Toc H Central Services.

TOC H STOCKPORT DISTRICT CONFERENCE HANDS ON DEVELOPMENT '98

To take place at Wood Lanes, Methodist Church, Adlington, Cheshire.

From 10.00 am to 5.00 pm.

On Wednesday 3rd June 1998.

The purpose is to pump some life into Toc H now!

Cost £5 inclusive of food.

Further information from:

A. Hill

228 Ben Davies Court, Underhill, Romiley Stockport SK6 4QP. Tel: 0161 4942033

A warm welcome awaits you.

REFLECTING ON PRAYER

The Toc H Chaplaincy Team have put together another programme on prayer in response to requests after the "Seven circles of prayer" programme that was run last year at Alison House. The title is "Reflecting on prayer", where we will be exploring our own prayer life and when, how and where Jesus prayed.

We have booked Alison House again from lunchtime 19th June until lunchtime 20th June. The cost this year is £30 per person.

Please contact one of the following to secure your place.

Terry Brown, 39 Bronte Avenue,
Christchurch BH23 2NA Tel. 01202 487233

Tom Elliott, 7 Allenfield Grove,
Wetherby, LS22 7QH Tel. 01937 583307

Nick Fawcett, 10 George Street,
Wellington TA21 8JA Tel. 01823 663399

A weekend Event on 3rd to 5th July 1998 at Dykeshead, Port of Menteith, Stirlingshire

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

Involvement with TOC H is sometimes described as "A Journey of Discovery".

What we believe affects how we live, and our experience affects what we believe.

Our journey involves developing loving relationships in every sphere of life and also a discovery of meaning and an exploration of spirituality.

The weekend event will spend some time exploring the meaning of this expression, seeking to reveal the underlying purpose of TOC H.

Whilst perhaps of particular interest to those new to TOC H, existing members will also gain benefit from the programme and all will be welcomed on the event, which should prove to be a relaxing break in the Scottish countryside, with new friends.

Cost: £15.00 per person.

For further details contact:

John Dunwell

31 Otterbeck Way, Aiskew, Bedale,
N. Yorks. DL8 1XL. Tel: 01677 425152